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The Indonesia Human Rights Campaign

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Memo: Submissions to UN Decolonisation Committee, August 1988

Jose Ramos Horta, who is now on study leave in Oxford, has asked me to write to all East Timor solidarity groups, urging you to present formal submissions to the UN Decolonisation Commission in August this year. He stresses the importance of having a large number of petitioners, exceeding if possible the record in 1986 when 21 petitioners appeared. He believes it is likely that a resolution on East Timor will be discussed this year at the General Assembly, although Portugal has no concrete proposal yet on the question.

Jose considers this a good year for East Timor at the UN. Portugal is now far more assertive on the question. Secondly, there is plenty of information about East Timor circulating, including presentations at the UN Commission and Sub-commission in Geneva. Thirdly, Indonesia will make a bid for Non-Aligned Movement chairmanship at the NAM foreign ministers conference in Cyprus in September this year and needs to be exposed on the East Timor question.

The new Foreign Minister, Ali Alatas, has announced his determination to "end the East Timor question, once and for all", and will be exerting great efforts to win countries over to his side. His diplomatic initiatives include expanding diplomatic ties with the countries of Latin America and Africa. Indonesia has just established diplomatic relations with Nicaragua and Cyprus. These initiatives are targetted both at the East Timor question and the NAM chairmanship.

You are therefore asked to send a petitioner and to approach individuals who might wish to appear as well. East Timor will be discussed some time between 12 and 15 August. You should write, not later than mid-July, to: The Chairman, Special Committee on Decolonisation, (attention Mr Tom Tanaka), 33rd Floor, UN Secretariat Building, New York, NY 10017, expressing your wish to send a petitioner, and giving the name. By doing this soon, it will enable the Committee to know how many petitioners are likely to appear and fix enough time for East Timor on the Committee's agenda.

Please send a copy of your letter to Jose Ramos Horta, Embassy of Mozambique, 1990 M Street, NW, Suite 570, Washington DC 20036. Jose will be in New York for the Committee meeting. His address in the UK is: Asian Studies Centre, St. Anthony's College, Oxford OX2 6JF.

You should aim to present a submission of 10 to 15 minutes long and prepare at least thirty copies of the document for distribution.

Carmel